DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 977 EA 025 520

TITLE School Buses. Traffic Safety Facts 1992.
INSTITUTION National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (DOT), Washington, D. C.
PUB DATE [93]
NOTE 5p.; A product of the National Center for Statistics and Analysis.
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bus Transportation; Elementary Secondary Education; Mortality Rate; *School Buses; School Safety; *Student Transportation; *Traffic Accidents; Traffic Safety; Vehicular Traffic

ABSTRACT

This document provides statistical information regarding the incidence of school bus-related accidents and fatalities. Descriptive data are presented on occupant and pedestrian fatalities by age, time of day, and principal impact point on school bus vehicle; the number of school-age pedestrian deaths; and the number of school bus-related crashes. Most of the information covers the years 1983 through 1992. Some of the findings include: (1) One-half of all school-age pedestrians killed by school buses in the past 10 years were 5- and 6-year-old children; (2) more school-age pedestrians were killed in the afternoon than any other time of day; (3) impacts to the front of the vehicle occur in 48 percent of the school bus-related crashes involving occupant fatalities; and (4) an average of 41 school-age children died in school bus-related traffic crashes each year--11 school-bus occupants and 30 school-age pedestrians. (LMI)

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Traffic Safety Facts 1992

School Buses

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

ED 364 977

"An average of 41 school-age children die in school bus related traffic crashes each year—11 school bus occupants and 30 pedestrians."

A school bus related crash is a crash which involves either directly or indirectly a school bus-type vehicle, or a vehicle functioning as a school bus, transporting children to or from school or school-related activities.

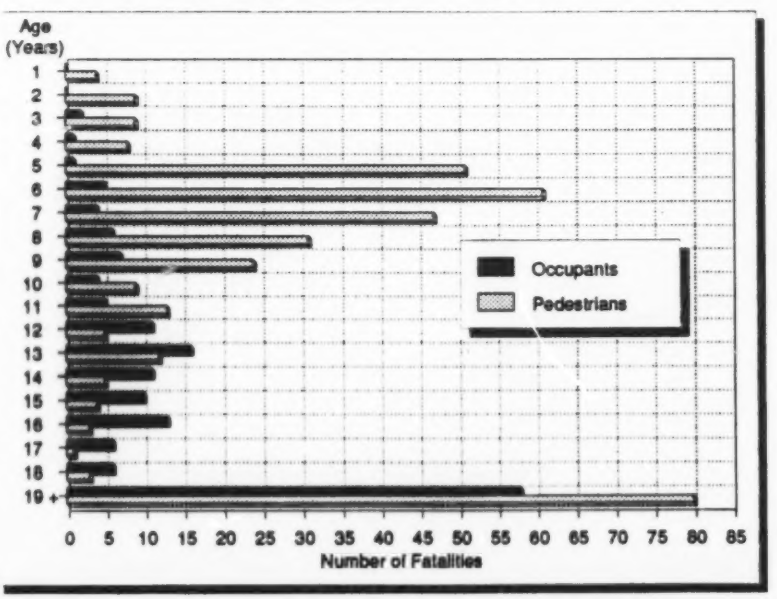
During the past 16 years there have been more than 650,000 fatal traffic crashes. Less than 0.4 percent were classified as school bus related. School bus-type vehicles were involved in 90 percent of those school bus related crashes. Vans and transit or other buses providing school-related group transportation accounted for the other 10 percent.

Since 1977, 2,508 people have died in school bus-related crashes—an average of 157 fatalities per year. Most of the people who lost their lives in those crashes (56 percent) were occupants of other vehicles involved. Nonoccupants (pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.) accounted for 33 percent of the deaths and school bus occupants 11 percent (drivers 2 percent, passengers 9 percent) accounted for the rest.

During the past 10 years, 300 school-age pedestrians (less than 19 years old) have died in school bus-related crashes. Two-thirds (64 percent) were killed by school buses, 6 percent by vehicles functioning as school buses, and 30 percent by other vehicles involved in the crashes.

Half of all school-age pedestrians killed by school buses in the past 10 years were 5- and 6-year-olds.

Figure 1. Occupant and Pedestrian Fatalities in School Bus Related Crashes, by Age, 1983-1992



Note: Occupant fatalities shown are for occupants of school buses or vehicles used as school buses.

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On average, 21 school-age pedestrians are killed by school buses (or vehicles used as school buses) each year, and 9 are killed by other vehicles involved in school bus related crashes.

More school-age pedestrians are killed in the afternoon than in the morning (73 percent and 27 percent, respectively); 42 percent are killed in crashes between 3:00 and 4:00 PM.

Table 1. Fatalities in School Bus Related Crashes by Time of Day, 1983-1992

Time of Day	Occupant Fatalities*	Pedestrians (School Age)	Total Fatalities
12:00-6:59 AM	17	4	21
7:00-7:59 AM	40	38	78
8:00-8:59 AM	10	26	36
9:00-9:59 AM	3	3	6
10:00-10:59 AM	4	0	4
11:00-11:59 AM	4	9	13
12:00-12:59 PM	5	11	16
1:00-1:59 PM	5	5	10
2:00-2:59 PM	15	37	52
3:00-3:59 PM	39	127	166
4:00-4:59 PM	4	34	38
5:00-11:59 PM	20	6	26
Total	166	300	466

* Does not include occupants of other vehicles in school bus related crashes.

"Half of all school-age pedestrians killed by school buses in the past 10 years were 5- and 6-year-olds."

"Inattention" and "failure to yield" were the factors most often reported by police for school bus drivers striking a school-age pedestrian. For drivers of other vehicles killing a pedestrian in a school bus related crash, the factors most often cited were "failure to obey signs, safety zones, or warning signs on vehicles," "passing where prohibited," and "driving too fast."

Between 1983 and 1992, 90 crashes occurred in which at least one occupant of a school bus or a vehicle functioning as a school bus died. The majority of those crashes (54 percent) involved another vehicle. In the 41 single-vehicle crashes, 62 occupants—16 drivers and 46 passengers—were killed. In the 49 multiple-vehicle crashes, 16 drivers and 88 passengers died. In the 41 single-vehicle crashes, the first harmful events were as follows: striking a fixed object (25 crashes), the vehicle overturning (6 crashes), a person falling from the vehicle (6 crashes), the vehicle colliding with a train (3 crashes), and other noncollision (1 crash).

In all crashes involving fatalities to occupants of a school bus or vehicle used as a school bus, the principal point of impact was the front of the vehicle in 48 percent of the crashes.

Table 2. Occupant Fatalities in School Bus Related Crashes by Principal Impact Point on School Bus Vehicle, 1983-1992

Principal Impact Point on Bus	Type of Crash					
	Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle		Total	
	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities
Front	16	28	27	67	43	95
Right Side	3	3	8	10	11	13
Left Side	2	3	6	9	8	12
Rear	2	2	6	10	8	12
Top	3	8	2	8	5	16
Undercarriage	1	1	0	0	1	1
Noncollision	12	15	0	0	12	15
Unknown	2	2	0	0	2	2
Total	41	62	49	104	90	166

"Impacts to the front of the vehicle occur in 48 percent of the school bus-related crashes involving occupant fatalities."

Table 3. School-Age Pedestrians Killed in School Bus Related Crashes by Vehicle Maneuver, 1983-1992

Vehicle Maneuver	Striking Vehicle			
	School Bus	Vehicle Used as School Bus	Other Vehicle	Total
Going Straight	70	10	51	131
Slowing or Stopping in Traffic Lane	4	1	3	8
Starting in Traffic Lane	83	2	0	85
Passing or Overtaking Another Vehicle	0	0	23	23
Leaving a Parked Position	10	2	0	12
Maneuvering to Avoid an Animal, Pedestrian, Object, Other Vehicle, etc.	0	0	7	7
Turning Right	9	0	0	9
Turning Left	9	0	0	9
Backing Up (Other Than for Parking)	5	1	0	6
Negotiating a Curve	0	0	5	5
Entering Parked Position	1	0	0	1
Changing Lanes	1	0	1	2
Other/Unknown	0	1	1	2
Total School-Age Pedestrians Killed	192	17	91	300

Since 1983, 4 drivers and 39 passengers have died in school buses providing transportation for purposes other than school or school-related activities (churches, civic organizations, etc.). In one such multi-vehicle crash, 27 occupants, including the driver, died.

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Table 4. School Bus-Related Crashes Involving Occupant Fatalities, 1983-1992

Year	School Bus Body-Type				Vehicle Used as School Bus				Total			
	Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle		Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle		Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle	
	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities
1983	1	9	3	7	1	2	0	0	2	11	3	7
1984	3	4	*3	15	1	1	2	2	4	5	5	17
1985	4	9	6	15	0	0	0	0	4	9	6	15
1986	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
1987	0	0	6	11	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	14
1988	2	2	4	5	1	1	0	0	3	3	4	5
1989	7	8	**5	25	3	3	1	1	10	11	6	26
1990	5	7	4	4	0	0	0	0	5	7	4	4
1991	0	0	6	10	4	6	1	1	4	6	7	11
1992	3	3	4	4	2	3	0	0	5	6	4	4
Total	25	42	42	97	16	20	7	7	41	62	49	104

* Includes one crash with 9 occupant fatalities.
** Includes one crash with 21 occupant fatalities.
Note: Does not include occupants of other vehicles in school bus related crashes.

Table 5. Fatalities in School Bus Related Crashes, 1977-1992

Year	Occupants of School Bus*			Pedestrians				Other Nonoccupants	Occupants of Other Vehicle	Total
	Driver	Passenger	Total	Struck by School Bus*	Struck by Other Vehicle	Unknown**	Total			
1977	1	20	21	44	19	2	65	8	100	194
1978	6	17	23	48	35	3	86	3	135	247
1979	5	13	18	50	25	3	78	6	103	205
1980	2	7	9	35	11	3	49	4	88	150
1981	3	11	14	35	9	2	46	3	81	144
1982	1	20	21	33	15	0	48	2	66	137
1983	2	16	18	36	12	0	48	6	88	160
1984	5	17	22	28	11	0	39	5	96	162
1985	2	22	24	28	13	0	41	4	89	158
1986	2	0	2	31	16	0	47	6	73	128
1987	8	9	17	32	11	0	43	5	113	178
1988	2	6	8	19	17	0	36	6	80	130
1989	4	33	37	25	7	0	32	1	72	142
1990	4	7	11	32	7	0	39	1	64	115
1991	2	15	17	21	5	0	26	5	86	134
1992	1	9	10	21	8	0	29	2	83	124
Total	**50**	**222**	**272**	**518**	**221**	**13**	**752**	**67**	**1,417**	**2,508**
Average	3	14	17	32	14	1	47	4	89	157

* Includes school bus body-type and vehicle used as school bus.
** Before 1982, no data are available to show which vehicle struck the pedestrian in multiple-vehicle crashes.

For more information:

Information on school bus traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NRD-31, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone inquiries should be addressed to Ms. Louann Hall at (202) 366-4198. FAX messages should be sent to (202) 366-7078. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.

"Serving the Highway Safety Community by the Numbers"